

Refitting at Sea

Dear Friends,

Yes, it is true. After 53 years of putting on successful annual conferences on Star Island, unforeseen circumstances made it necessary for us to cancel our planned conference this year. We are all disappointed, and upset with the inability to bring our Conference vessel to our home Star Island port, and the necessity to postpone the rising excitement of this year's IRAS Conference until 2008. Yes, there are things that we cannot control, but in our faith and hope, we do have choices, and there are things that we can do, and things that we do control. And we remember with glad hearts what we all share, the amazing collective that we are, and the souls that reside in our relationships. *They will bind you with love that is graceful and green as a stem* (Leonard Cohen, who was my own solace this year). Yes, we will be back.

What Happened

The Star Island Corporation leadership had been working to address a number of fire safety issues, and had been making progress on many of them, particularly issues of egress, of which we have all been aware. Nevertheless, a number of electrical wiring problems had been overlooked, necessitating a delay in opening the Island for summer conferences. Until late June, we had no reason to believe these problems would not be well in hand long before our conference opening. Indeed, until June 27, the verbal understanding between the Rye Fire Department and the Island leadership was to this effect. Apparently the electrical issues were a bigger problem. The possibility of a venue change was obviated by the late date and the desire to sustain the quality of our conference experience. Our Executive Committee voted unanimously to cancel the conference outright, and refund checks were quickly in the mail. The Corporation is currently investigating the oversight and communication failure, and we await their report. Star Island did finally open, but they have sustained a major financial hit, of about 1.5 million dollars. Our hearts do go out to the Island (and for those of us who will, our checkbooks as well), particularly to the

human beings we care about, for our spiritual home, perhaps the very *mater* from which IRAS emerged. But while Star Island is our beloved home port, it is not our body, and it is not our cross. And indeed, while it will now take some refitting, our new 2008 IRAS Conference *Emergence: Nature's Mode of Creativity—The Human Dimension* is still one of our finest and most seaworthy vessels, having been booked to capacity again for a second year running, and we expect the delayed conference to be no less rewarding.

The Council met with the Star Island executive director, the conference director, and a member of the Board in Portsmouth at the end of July. Well into spring, the Star Island Corporation leadership was unaware of the seriousness of the electrical problems, for whatever reasons (those now under scrutiny), and acted as best they could. While the executive director (a single mother who had only seen her daughter a few nights all summer) was stepping down, she is not being scapegoated, and will be consulting on the transition. The board member present will be serving as the transitional director, and will not be accepting remuneration. The financial loss, both of revenues and by virtue of physical plant costs, while devastating, is not terminal (roughly a third of their endowment, comparatively, though short term loans are picking up some of the slack). The bottom line is that the Corporation will be doing some aggressive fund raising, and will, in all likelihood be raising their room and board rates, probably to the tune of 15-25%, by our judgment. Their conferee costs have long been supported by Island fund raising, and have been sustained for some time at levels below other comparable venues.

What We Are Doing

We are, in a sense, having to refit our ship at sea, absent our usual nurturant summer dock, which we all deeply missed. I do long to see many of you, so deeply missed this year, on Star Island in 2008. We have every expectation that we will be back, and will celebrate that homecoming with joy. Lacking our annual membership meeting, Council members, officers, and many committee

Yes, the **IRAS 2008 Star Island conference** will be the postponed conference created for summer 2007, called *Emergence: Nature's Mode of Creativity – The Human Dimension*. Cochairs Philip Clayton, Terrence Deacon, and Ursula Goodenough have reassembled the strong cast of speakers invited for 2007, and Star 2008 promises to be every bit as interesting and exciting as the conference we all missed this past summer. Send in the application form included with this Newsletter to reserve your place for summer 2008!

members have agreed to stay on. To keep the blood fresh, Council members due to rotate off agreed to resign, and have been replaced by presidential appointment with the newly nominated. Don Braxton is continuing to work apace as our new webmaster, and our active listserv discussion group has been moved to Yahoo upon the withdrawal of its previous support.

Our conference on *Emergence: The Human Dimension* will take place in summer 2008, as we still want to address the emergent evolution of symbolic communication, and the webs of collective cognition and intersubjectivity of which we, and IRAS, are also so much a part. We also now have conferences in the works for 2009 and 2010, on the autonomous individual and on the energy crisis. Indeed, the co-organizers of the former (Ted and John's Excellent Adventure) have already lined up seven speakers, so the excitement will continue.

Given the current high interest in matters of science and religion, we are giving thought to how IRAS could serve a larger community, perhaps by holding a winter conference in addition to our traditional Star Island event. In consideration of this possibility, and also to gather information of use in the unlikely event that our Star Island port should fail us, a committee chaired by Michael Cavanaugh has been looking into other possible venues for IRAS conferences. You will find his report later in these pages.

We have talked at several meetings about doing some of the initially membership-targeted fund raising that might be necessary to continue to keep costs affordable,

and not to continue to run conferences at a loss, which we continue to do, even under our greatest successes. As Island and transportation costs have gone up, so have speaker costs, our largest single expense. The alternative is fewer speakers, or further restrictions on the geographical range of speakers recruited, and we are reluctant to rein in our momentum of quality. We have also decided, given the likelihood of an increase in Island costs, that we will keep our conference fee at the same level for 2008. Our vice-president for development, Ursula Goodenough has been heading an ad hoc fund raising group, and if you have not already received this appeal, you will shortly. In order to navigate these difficult shoals, and refit ourselves in a way that sustains affordability and the quality we have all come to expect, it is important that we all pitch in as we best can.

All of us benefit from the quality of our conference speakers, who continue to come sans honoraria, as we support their presence as our guests. And we benefit from the pages of *Zygon* which are full of the work of such speakers, past and present, and the momentum they generate in the cultural project which is our dialogue.

My great hope and longing, is to see old friends and families, see the face of new friends and friends to be, and engage in the powerful and vital intellectual experience that leaves my cup full for months, at the IRAS conference at Star Island next year.

John Teske, IRAS President

Planning Future IRAS Conferences

Karl E. Peters, Vice President for Conferences

IRAS fulfills its mission principally by holding the annual conference on Star Island, which is what IRAS has been doing since 1954. Paraphrasing the mission statement of the IRAS Constitution, the mission of IRAS is

...to promote the creative formulation of dynamic and positive relationships between concepts developed by science and the goals and hopes of humanity expressed through religion, and to accomplish this in such universal terms that they be understood by all peoples, and provide a basis for world-wide cooperation and human welfare.

Thus the goals of IRAS are practical goals, the good of humanity and, I would add, the good of the planet. The statement tells me that the science-religion enterprise IRAS style is dynamic and positive, and the methods of IRAS are creative.

How Conferences Are Planned

We seek to fulfill the mission of IRAS through the planning and holding of conferences. I remember in the 1970s how Star Island conferences sometimes germinated. Some IRAS leaders would sit at a table in the Star Island snack bar on Friday evening as the current conference closed and ask, "Well, what should we do next year?" A

topic was suggested, often an outgrowth of the current conference, a chair and committee were chosen (volunteered), and next summer's conference was on the way. Sometimes the president of IRAS had to shore up a conference committee during the year, but usually this informal process worked.

As IRAS moved into new generations of leadership, it also evolved organizationally, so that more people could be involved in the planning of conferences and related activities. In 1981 the Council voted that the president be directed to "appoint a Conference Planning Committee: with the mandate (1) to generate themes for all IRAS conferences from its own committee membership and to receive ideas from outside the committee, (2) to develop and coordinate conference themes three years in advance, (3) to report to each IRAS Council meeting and to receive Council authorization for its plans, and (4) to propose to the Council Conference Program Chairpersons and Program Committees." In 1981 this was regarded as an experiment. But in 1982 the Council voted to re-establish the Conference Planning Committee as a permanent committee with Marjorie Davis and Karl Peters as co-chairs. In 1983, by-law changes established two new vice presidents, one for development and one for conferences. The

first vice president for development was Robert Sorensen, and the first vice president for conferences was Marjorie Davis. The vice president for conferences also became the chair of the Long-Range Conference Planning Committee. Succeeding vice presidents for conferences have been Barbara Whittaker-Johns (beginning 1989), Loyal Rue (beginning 1996), Robert Schaible (beginning 1998), and Karl Peters (beginning 2004).

What does a vice president for conferences do? I don't know about the others, but it seems to me that most of the year I do nothing—and then I panic as the next meeting of the Conference Planning Committee approaches. Actually, when I think a little more, I do a lot of day-dreaming about possible conference ideas and also ways in which IRAS might do more than its annual Star Island Conferences. Apparently others do some day-dreaming or creative thinking as well. For when an invitation goes out for ideas, a number of exciting possibilities come in—always more than we can actually carry out.

A primary task of the Long-Range Conference Planning Committee is to select and recommend to the Council which received proposals to develop as conferences. This committee currently consists of fourteen members. They included the president and vice presidents of IRAS, the Star Island Conference Coordinator, the editor of *Zygon*, and six members appointed by the president, two every year for staggered three-year terms. This provides both change and continuity on the committee. The vice president for conferences leads the committee in its deliberations.

Some questions asked by the committee as it looks at a conference proposal are 1) What is its relation to the mis-

sion of IRAS? 2) Where is the science? 3) Where is the religion? 4) How does it relate to recent conferences? 5) Will it likely bring 260 people to Star Island (our version of “Will it play in Peoria”)? and 6) Does it have a champion or two, willing to do the hard work of turning the idea into a working conference?

One of the most difficult tasks for anyone who proposes and offers to lead a conference to formulate a conference theme and title in response to the above questions and under the scrutiny of the committee. Even though the idea of a conference may begin in the mind of one or two people, the Conference Planning Committee and then the Council need to have a “feeling of ownership” about what is being proposed. Several drafts of a proposal for a conference and much consultation among the proposers and others is the rule. In the end, the conference is all the better for it. One of the distinguishing marks of IRAS in my experience is that, compared to other science and religion organizations, the most important activity of IRAS—developing and running conferences—is a community enterprise, not just the work of a few individuals.

Current and Future Conferences

IRAS is between two excellent Star Island conferences on the theme of emergence, the 2006 conference on *Emergence: Nature's Mode of Creativity*, cochaired by George Fisher and Ursula Goodenough and the 2008 conference (postponed from 2007) *Emergence: Nature's Mode of Creativity – The Human Dimension*, cochaired by Terrence Deacon, Philip Clayton, and Ursula Goodenough.

Conferences for 2009 and 2010 have been developed by the Conference Planning Committee and approved by



Jane Penfield and David Klotz hosted a picnic at their home in August. IRAS members from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, and New York attended, and despite missing Star Island, still managed to have a good time. Shown are Roger Brown, Ted Laurensen, Cliff and Ibi Matthews

the Council. The Planning Committee is truly long range. The 2009 conference, with the current working title *Gods, Scientists, and the Myth of the Autonomous Individual*, will be cochaired by Ted Laurensen, corporate lawyer, and John Teske, professor of psychology. This conference is a further development of the concept of emergence, focusing on the historical emergence of the value of the autonomous individual and its related institutions in Western society and asking if this value is sustainable as we move into the future. Part of the current form of the conference statement reads: "The idea of the autonomous individual underlies much of the thought, institutional practices, and ways of living in modern Western societies. However, it may be problematic for a flourishing human future in a sustainable planetary environment."

This conference will address the social, historical and developmental genesis of human individuality, and its consequences. Taking as given the physical emergence of our universe and the biological and social emergence of humanity explored in our last two conferences, we will delve into the historical development and current significance of the autonomous individual. We will examine: 1) the psychological and social development of the autonomous individual, 2) ways in which religious ideologies contributed to its genesis, 3) its centrality to the desirability and practice of democracy, 4) the assumptions with regard to the rational pursuit of individual goals implicit in capitalist economic theory, 5) the need (or not) for institutional frameworks providing sources of power to oppose the subjugation of human beings to unfettered governmental power, 6) the personal and cultural paradoxes inherent in the nurturance and practice of autonomy, 7) and the biases and illusions that inhere in the pursuit of individual happiness.

Presentations by anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, economists, religious historians, and political and legal theorists will help the conference explore these issues and related questions.

While the 2006 and 2008 conferences on emergence address the evolution of the cosmos, earth, life, and humanity, the autonomous individual conference begins to look to the future. The 2010 Star Island conference will carry forward this historical trajectory by addressing the world's energy future, asking what impact newer kinds of energy might have on our values, the way we live, and social institutions, and asking how ethics and religion might respond to provide guidance. *Religious and Ethical Perspectives on Our Energy Future* is cochaired by Normand Laurendeau, professor of engineering, and Larry Rasmussen, professor of religious ethics.

The opening paragraphs of the approved conference proposal state that the conference will be

...devoted to the topic of energy policy, focusing especially on religious and ethical issues confronting the human prospect as we encounter the inevitable shift from fossil to renewable fuels. The basic problem is that we are depleting fossil fuels while

piling up nuclear wastes, yet solar and hydrogen power are still too expensive. In short, we are entering a period of monumental transition with respect to both the forms and use of energy. As for any technological transition of this magnitude, ultimate success will require good ethics and religion as well as good science and technology. Unfortunately, previous church pronouncements on energy have mostly been dismissed owing to feeble consideration of accompanying scientific and technological realities. Religious proclamations, on the other hand, have the advantage of being ultimately concerned with truth, regardless of economic and political pressures. For these reasons, we claim that the time has come to bring together scientists, engineers, ethicists and theologians to help plan for a sustainable energy future.

The conference will be organized to highlight "technological, economic and political issues associated with energy conservation, the nuclear option and renewable energies in the context of global warming, sustainability, and human purpose. Our emphasis will be on (1) ethical and religious perspectives that might guide future energy choices and (2) energy choices that, in turn, might challenge ethical and religious perspectives. Queries of interest include these:

- How will ultimate human values be challenged by the coming energy transition?
- What are the ethical implications of heightened competition for energy resources, including possible economic depression or world-wide panic associated with the lack of such resources?
- What happens to the preferential option for the poor under such circumstances? In particular, how do we balance human needs for both food and fuel?
- How are answers to such questions affected by both optimistic and pessimistic viewpoints on technology?"

Program Activities Other than Star Island

Even though Star Island conferences are the major focus of the vice president for conferences and the Long-Range Conference Planning Committee, IRAS has a history of conducting other conferences and symposia, often with other organizations. Most prominent is the series of IRAS sessions at the America Association of the Advancement of Science, of which IRAS is an affiliate society. With the leadership of Sol Katz, the current IRAS vice president for science, we are hoping to develop more AAAS sessions in cooperation with the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program of the AAAS.

We are also exploring possibilities for holding a mid-winter IRAS conference, perhaps in cooperation with another science and religion organization. It was decided to begin this exploration at the July 2007 Planning Committee and Council meetings in Portsmouth. Some of us have long had a dream of a midwinter conference or symposium for IRAS members. In the past some initial efforts

have been made to develop such an activity. However, because we are a volunteer organization and people are limited in time and resources, we have not been able to step further toward more conferences. Now we are making another try. Hopefully the next Newsletter will describe some good fruits from this effort.

Finally, IRAS is an open society. All its members are welcome at any of its committee or Council meetings. And anyone is welcome to become a participant in the

conference planning process. If you have ideas for future conferences or other IRAS program activities, please e-mail me at kpeters396@cox.net. From many good ideas in the past, winnowed in our careful selection process, excellent conferences and symposia have resulted. Look again at the mission statement of IRAS and the questions that the Conference Planning Committee asks when selecting proposals. Day-dream with me and send me your thoughts.

ESSSAT and Other Developments

Willem B. Drees

As a scholar based in Europe, president of ESSSAT, the European Society for the Study of Science and Theology, and vice-president of interdisciplinary affairs of IRAS, I occasionally hear some news. Let me share bits of information on various developments with you, on ESSSAT and other societies, and on academic positions.

ESSSAT was conceived in a conversation between Karl Schmitz Moormann and Arthur Peacocke on a boat back from Star Island to the mainland, in 1983. The first European conference was in 1986. Since then, there have been conferences every other year. We have seen various members of IRAS there, including Phil and Neva Hefner, John Teske, Karl Peters, and many others.

The next conference will be in Sweden, April 30–May 5, 2008. This will be a long weekend for many, due to May 1 being Ascension Day as well as Labour Day in many countries. The theme will be ‘How do we know? Understanding in Science and Theology’. Thus, we return to a basic debate on the cognitive or noncognitive character of religion. Four plenary lectures, by Lewis Wolpert, Noreen

Herzfeld, Peter Gärdenfors, and myself; room for up to 100 short papers; a public symposium with contributions by Antje Jackelén (now bishop of the diocese of Lund, Sweden, after having served as director of The Zygon Center in Chicago) and Mikael Stenmark. Flyers will be distributed in September; deadline for abstracts, early registration, etc. is November 1, 2007. The information is also on www.ESSSAT.org.

ESSSAT picks a different location every time. We always have local partners, who use the partnership to promote and develop ‘religion and science’ in their own environment. Last time, we were in Iasi, Romania, where we were in close contact with two universities and Metropolitan Daniel of the Romanian Orthodox Church. In 2004 we were in Barcelona, Spain. This time we work with Swedish colleagues and with Sigtunastiftelsen, a beautiful conference centre rooted in the social engagement of the Swedish Lutheran Church, and the early ecumenical student movement (www.sigtunastiftelsen.se). The 2010 conference will be in Glasgow, in cooperation with the

IRAS Donations – 2007 (through September)

Nancy Anscheutz	Simon Baldock	Ruth & Bob Bercaw
Elizabeth Bjorkman	Muriel Blaisdell	Claudine Blanchard
Eric Borgwardt	Don Browning	Chris Corbally
Marj Davis & Karl Peters	Richard Dubé	Bonnie & Bill Falla
Paula Fangman	Helene Fatt	Richard Fetzner
Tom & Winifred Gilbert	Roger Gillete	David Glover
Ursula Goodenough	John Grim	Marion Griswold
Gwen & Bill Griswold	Edward & Mary Ann Gross	John Hooper & Gail Pesyna
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Norm Richardson	Edmund Robinson	Dan & Lisa Solomon
Marion Steininger	Sara Sturges	John Teske
James Tomes	Rabbi Lawrence Troster	Eugene & Emily Troxell
Ken & Roberta Vincett	Doris Wildorf	Neil Wollman & Abby Fuller

Science and Religion Forum (UK). From the 2006 conference in Iasi, Romania, there are two books in the making. This fall, our yearbook *Studies in Science and Theology 11*, with 20 contributions from the short paper sessions will appear: *Humanity, the World and God: Understandings and Actions*. March 2008 we expect *Creation's Diversity: Voices from Science and Theology*, to appear with T&T Clark/Continuum, in our series Issues in Science and Theology. The website www.ESSSAT.org has been renewed and will be developed further.

We now see coming a substantial number of graduate students and younger scholars who are developing a career related to 'religion and science'. We have been able to attract such younger scholars (a) by the enthusiasm of younger members who reached out and told others; (b) by having the ESSSAT research prize and the ESSSAT student prize aimed at younger scholars—the one going to a PhD dissertation or something similar, the other to a smaller piece of work in an academic programme; (c) by focusing the scholarships we have also on younger scholars; and (d) by giving opportunity to present and discuss their work, in at most ten parallel sessions where short papers are presented and discussed (and publishing a selection of these afterwards), a move which makes it possible to 'count' in the professional academic work. Thus, by age and gender I think we are not that different from IRAS, except of course for the teenagers and younger children at IRAS conferences. We are different in that a larger portion is professionally involved, and a smaller section consists of 'interested lay persons' relative to the academic side. Of course, an attractive feature IRAS membership has, aside of the conferences, is *Zygon*; our book series do not have a similar standing.

As an organization, we are totally run by volunteers. The core consists of the president, treasurer, secretary, editor of the newsletter, and vice-president for publications. For each conference (a two-year cycle) an organizing committee with some local partners is formed, both for the logistics surrounding the conference and the programme. There is a council with up to ten additional persons, aside of those referred to above, selected with an eye on regional, professional, confessional, and linguistic diversity. When we have our conference, the Council meets one day before the conference and one session during the conference; the other year the Council meets for one weekend. (In a sense, we take twice as long as IRAS: a conference every two years and one meeting in between.)

There are no paid positions, though occasionally we lean on the support someone has available in his or her institution. I currently have a student assistant who helped extensively with editorial work on the ESSSAT books. We have received grants for the prizes from a Dutch foundation, the Radboud Foundation, and also in the past from Counterbalance, as well as subsidies for speakers and scholarships from the John Templeton Foundation and various other organizations, such as national academies or other sponsors. Conference rooms and facilities are often made available for free by the partner/host organization, a university or so. Going to different places implies that contacts have to be developed each time

anew, but also that for such external partners this is a unique opportunity. So far we have been able to give a fair number of scholarships (20–30), both to colleagues from economically more limited countries and to younger scholars and graduate students. This has been important to avoid becoming northwest European on economic grounds, and also helped to bring in 'the next generation'.

ISSR, the International Society for Science and Religion, had its general assembly in the margin of the conference in honour of John Brooke, at Lancaster, UK, Monday 23 July–Thursday 26 July. A large conference is expected to be held late 2008 or early 2009. ISSR is preparing a statement on ID, prepared by a subcommittee on which Ronald Numbers and Michael Ruse are serving. However, some others are less outspoken on this issue; the text may be expected to be quite cautious.

CTNS continues to develop in relation to the Barbour 'legacy', in that Ian has given a substantial part of his Templeton prize for the chair named after him, first occupied now by Bob Russell (who for decades did develop CTNS without a paid academic chair). Barbour is in the process of donating his personal library to CTNS.

Metanexus had its annual conference in June; local societies which have received sponsorship had to send a representative there. They plan to have their next conference in Madrid, Europe, next year summer. Out of the Local Societies Groups other networks are forming, such as Sophia-Europe, a mostly southern European network.

Copenhagen University has a conference on *Religion in the 21st Century*, coming this September, with religion and science as a major component. Niels Henrik Gregersen is involved, as well as various others, a keynote will be by Philip Clayton with a response by me. The Evangelische Akademie im Rheinland (near Bonn, Germany) had a conference last April; another German conference will be at the Evangelische Akademie in Arnoldshain (near Frankfurt) early October. There were conferences in Romania and Spain, both this September, and there is much more going on.

Oxford has appointed Peter Harrison to the Andreas Idreos Chair, as successor of John Brooke. Harrison came from Australia (Bond University); he is a historian with excellent books on the development of the concept 'religion' in the modern period and on the Bible, Protestantism, and the rise of science.

At Yale, the School of Forestry has appointed Mary-Evelyn Tucker and John Grim to positions focussing on religion and ecology. That area is by itself becoming a substantial field, with the Forum on Religion and Ecology as one major movement, and a scholarly society for Religion, Nature and Culture with an annual conference as well. At Harvard, the Divinity School is in the process of selecting a professor for science and religion, on a newly endowed chair. The Zygon Center has appointed oncologist Gayle Woloschak as its director and Lea Schweitz as its assistant director; Lea Schweitz has been appointed to the position in systematic theology left vacant by the departure of Antje Jackelén, who was elected bishop of the diocese of Lund, Sweden. Andrew Lustig was appointed to the Holmes Rolston chair at Davidson College. In Mainz, Ger-

many, the Forschungsstätte der Evangelische Studiengemeinschaft (FEST, a think tank of the German churches and academies) has appointed Gerald Hartung, a philosopher, as successor of Ion Stamatescu (and before him, of

Jürgen Hübner) to a position to address issues of theology and science. There probably is much more that could be pointed to, but so far for some news I picked up recently.

Report of the Ad Hoc Venue Committee

Michael Cavanaugh, MichaelCav@aol.com

The ad hoc Venue Committee was appointed to develop a “just in case” scenario of places we could hold our conference in case the hotel at Star Island were ever blown away in a storm or lost in a fire, or some other contingency forced us to leave the island. But after the “crisis of 2007,” the IRAS Council decided to expand its scope to cover more mundane possibilities, such as this past summer’s fire-regulation problems and other scenarios we could imagine. So we got busy and gave a preliminary report and recommendations to the Council at Portsmouth this summer, and asked for further instructions, which were forthcoming. Their instructions were that, in view of the Corporation’s likely pulling out all stops to make the 2008 season work, our committee should not worry about that year, and should instead put our energies into looking for a venue for 2009. And since the Council believes we’ll be at Star that year too, they specified an important criterion in our search, namely that the venue needs to have good cancellation policies (though the Council was clear that we are willing to pay a reasonable deposit to secure a good backup venue for 2009).

We have identified 32 specific sites and have discovered several general websites (such as the YMCA Conference Centers website, the Episcopal Conference Centers website, and the websites for centers in some states). Of the 32 specific sites, we have eliminated about half and have put most of the other half on a list of sites “not yet adequately explored.” These are all venues which (at first blush anyway) appear to be too small or have some other significant disadvantage. That leaves four sites which we are actively investigating: one is in New Hampshire, one is in North Carolina, one is in southwest New York, and one is in Wisconsin.

Each of these four has problems. The one in Wisconsin won’t book us until after its 2008 season (since previous tenants have dibs); the one in North Carolina requires an exorbitant deposit and is hard to get to; the one in New York could only host us in the third week of June, which is a problem for European speakers and conferees because of the academic calendar there; and the one in New Hampshire is very hard to get to. But we are still working on all of these, and exploring others as we can.

I am struck, as we go down our list of requirements and preferences with each site’s salesperson, how much our traditions and programs have co-evolved with Star. In every case it would take some adjustment, and perhaps that is why the Council and most of the committee keeps saying “Of course we will be at Star if they can accommo-

date us.” On the other hand, some of our committee members think we ought to take this opportunity to consider expanding ourselves beyond the confines of Star. Personally I doubt we will do that if Star can accommodate us, but in any case that is a decision for the Council and not for our committee. Our duty is to explore concrete options; your duty is of course to give good feedback, both to our committee as to venues, and to Council members on the broader implications of the eventual decision.

Finally, and not entirely incidentally, one of our members insists that we ought to develop a “scramble plan” that could be used even in 2008, as well as for 2009 or any year thereafter. And truth to tell, the long list of places, many of which would theoretically work if we significantly change some of our parameters, serves as a useful “last-minute list.” But the really good places are booked well in advance, and it is clear that the Council would be wise to plan for reserving a place for 2009 about which we can feel some excitement, provided the cancellation policies are reasonable.

If YOU know of a possible venue please write me and tell us about it. I’ll let you know if it is already on our list, and if it isn’t I’ll put it there and we’ll look into it.

The Add Hoc Venue Committee:

Stacey Ake	Carol Albright
Nancy Anshuetz	Chris Corbally
Jeff Dahms	Stanley Klein
Bob McCue	Karl Peters
President John Teske, ex officio	
Michael Cavanaugh, chair	

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Information on IRAS can be found at www.iras.org. Star Island is described at www.starisland.org. Information on conference fees, room and board, and registration can be found at www.iras.org/conference.html, or contact Bonnie Falla, IRAS Registrar, 810-1/2 N. Ninth St., Allentown, PA 18102.

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